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PAGE 01

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TOR:121201Z AUG 74

R 120749Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5335

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

INFO RUHQHQA/CINCPAC

RUDKBT/AMEMBASSY RABAT 26

BT

S E C R E T SEOUL 5260

JOINT EMBASSY/COMUSK MESSAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, KS, MO

SUBJECT: SALE OF KOREAN MANUFACTURED M-16 RIFLES TO MOROCCO

1. EMBASSY AND COMUSK HAVE CONSIDERED VARIOUS LOCAL FACTORS INVOLVED IN ROKG'S REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO SELL 1500 KOREAN MANUFACTURED M-16 RIFLES TO MOROCCO AND ON BALANCE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NOT MAKE EXCEPTION TO POLICY IN THIS CASE.

2. FROM STRICTLY MILITARY POINT OF VIEW QUANTITY OF RIFLES PROPOSED FOR SALE APPROXIMATES THREE DAYS' PRODUCTION AND IS INSIGNIFICANT. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT THE LOSS IN PRODUCTION COULD BE MADE UP BY USE OF A FEW OVERTIME HOURS. ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE NO OBJECTION ON MILITARY GROUNDS.

3. IN FAVOR OF SALE ARE THE ECONOMIC AND MORE IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY ADVANTAGES WHICH WOULD ACCRUE TO ROKG. ROKS HAVE BEEN HARD PRESSED TO FIND MEANS TO COUNTER SUCCESSFUL NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE IN NORTH AFRICA WHICH HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY ASSISTED BY LARGE MILITARY EQUIPMENT SALES. ASIDE FROM TUNISIA, MOROCCO IS ONLY CLOSE FRIEND ROKS HAVE IN THIS AREA AND M-16 SALE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE USEFUL IN STRENGTHENING SOUTH KOREA-MOROCCO RELATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE BELIEVE REFUSAL TO ALLOW SALE WOULD NOT REPRESENT SETBACK TO ROK RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO AND ROK DIPLOMACY. RATHER IT WOULD BE IN NATURE OF LOST OPPORTUNITY.

4. ASIDE FROM POSSIBLE COMMERCIAL LOSS TO IS MANUFACTURER, PRINCIPAL COUNTERBALANCING POINT IN OUR VIEW IS THAT THIRD COUNTRY M-16 SALE AT THIS TIME PRIOR TO FULFILLMENT ROKS OWN REAL NEEDS FOR M-16S WOULD INTERFERE WITH ESTABLISHED PRIORITIES AND SET BAD PRECEDENT. WE WOULD

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3	6

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PAGE 02-02

NC 11095

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BE ALLOWING ROKS TO DIVERT EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURED IN
U.S. FINANCED PLANT FROM ITS IMPORTANT AND PRIME PURPOSE.
THIS WOULD SET PRECEDENT FOR ROKS TO MAKE M-16 (AND OTHER
EQUIPMENT SALES) ELSEWHERE BEFORE THEY HAVE
FULFILLED THEIR OWN NEEDS AND OBJECTIVES OF MODERNIZATION
PROGRAM.

5. SINCE SALE NOT ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVING ROK DIPLOMATIC
OBJECTIVES IN MIDDLE EAST, AND SINCE IT DOES NOT ACCORD
WITH US INTEREST IN FULFILLING KOREAN MODERNIZATION
PROGRAM, EMBASSY/COMUSK OPPOSE EXCEPTION TO THIRD
COUNTRY SALES RESTRICTIONS IN THIS CASE. HABIB

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